

'Double standard' by ADF rejected

EXCLUSIVE

RORY CALLINAN
DEFENCE WRITER

An army officer was shifted over a relationship that occurred in similar circumstances to a sanctioned romance involving the Vice Chief of Defence.

The 2016 army case that has not been made public involved a senior officer being quietly removed from his command after he told his superiors of his intent to start a relationship with a lower ranked officer.

The male officer, who was single at the time, as was the consenting female officer he was proposing to date, was immediately sent to another job, and while cleared of any impropriety, faced criticism for causing logistic problems within Defence.

The relationship appears at odds with the approach by the Defence Force to a romance undertaken by the Vice Chief of Defence Vice Admiral Ray Griggs in 2014.

Vice Admiral Griggs left his then wife of 22 years, Kerrie, to start a relationship with navy public relations officer Commander Chloe Wootten, who was also married.

The vice admiral told his wife and his superiors of his decision to end the marriage and start a new relationship in October 2014. He married Commander Wootten in 2016, and she took his surname.

Defence has refused to release Commander Griggs's promotional track. But her byline as a public relations officer in official Defence publications in October 2011, appears as a lieutenant but by late 2014 as a commander.

Defence has said it undertook two reviews and there had been an investigation by the Inspector General of the Australian Defence Force in relation to the change of relationship status involving Vice Admiral Griggs, all of which cleared him of any impropriety.



Griggs

Asked about the other officer's case, a Defence spokesman did not comment on the specific case but rejected any premise of inconsistency in applying the rules.

"Defence policies are applied consistently and decisions are based on the facts of each individual case. There is no basis to your assertions," he said.

The army officer's case was revealed to *The Australian* this week by concerned senior military insiders who said their morale was at stake, with lower ranks believing it was one rule for those at the top and another for them.

"They can't believe it when they hear the bosses giving them lectures telling them not to fraternise," said one.

Defence refuses to release the two reviews relating to Vice Admiral Griggs's change of relationship status or provide any details about what process they involved or who was interviewed.

The stand has been slammed by former navy petty officer and now senator for the Nick Xenophon Team party Rex Patrick, who called for all reports on the matter to be released.

Senator Patrick said personal information could and should be redacted but matters of fact such as policy, investigative approach and findings should be released.

Kerrie Griggs first complained to Defence about aspects of the marriage breakdown in early 2015.

She sent a second complaint to Defence several months later after recovering torn-up draft love letters in a recycling bin at the Defence home she had shared with Vice Admiral Griggs.

Doyle accuser wants sex report handed to police

EXCLUSIVE

CHIP LE GRAND

Robert Doyle's chief accuser wants a City of Melbourne report into sexual harassment and indecent assault allegations against the former lord mayor forwarded to Victoria Police.

Tessa Sullivan, a former City of Melbourne councillor recruited by Mr Doyle to join his 2016 election team, first approached police in December about her treatment at the hands of the lord mayor, including an incident on May 2 last year when he allegedly grabbed her breast in the back seat of a car.

She told *The Weekend Australian* she was advised by Deputy Commissioner Andrew Crisp to wait until a council investigation led by Ian Freckelton QC was complete before deciding whether



Former City of Melbourne councillor Tessa Sullivan

to press criminal charges. Dr Freckelton's final report was expected to be handed to City of Melbourne chief executive Ben Rimmer either late yesterday or today after a deadline passed for

Mr Doyle to provide further submissions to the inquiry.

A special meeting of council has been called on Tuesday to discuss the investigation into Mr Doyle. Mr Rimmer this week said

it was "essential" to finalise the investigation in a timely fashion.

Mr Doyle, Melbourne's lord mayor for 10 years and a previous state leader of the Liberal Party, has been in hospital since early last month receiving treatment for an acute mental health issue.

A copy of Dr Freckelton's interim findings was made available to Mr Doyle's lawyers on January 30. He has not responded to its contents but denied any wrongdoing in his earlier testimony to the inquiry. The inquiry accepted formal complaints from Ms Sullivan, Melbourne City councillor Cathy Oke and a third woman named Carla, who has no connection to the council. Carla alleges she was accosted by Mr Doyle when she sat next to him at a medical research dinner organised by Melbourne Health.

A separate Melbourne Health investigation into Carla's claims

and Mr Doyle, who was chairman of Melbourne Health, is expected to deliver an interim finding within the next week.

The report will enable Victoria's Department of Health to implement policy changes to improve the handling of sexual harassment complaints against senior hospital and health figures. The investigation will remain open to allow Mr Doyle more time to respond and, potentially, more women to come forward.

Ms Sullivan said she was reluctant to press criminal charges against Mr Doyle given the impact of the scandal on her physical and mental health and family life.

She said she was warned by police that the process of pursuing sexual assault cases was very difficult on victims. She was interviewed multiple times by the Freckelton inquiry.

"Having gone through that

investigation process, I don't know if I would want to press charges," she said.

"It was absolutely brutal. I was questioned for 10 hours at a time, I had to re-enact the assault. I don't want to go through all that again and I don't want to see Robert Doyle again."

Ms Sullivan said she was sympathetic towards Mr Doyle because of his ill-health but had waited too long for her complaint to be properly dealt with.

"It is not a compassion contest," she said. "It is about getting the truth out. He is denying us the truth and doing everything he can to make sure it never sees the light of day. Council won't give us any answers or release it. It has been going on for so long."

Mr Doyle could not be reached for comment.

INQUIRER P17

Piano conservation the preserve of the few



COLIN MURTY

Geoffrey Lancaster, at Perth's Edith Cowan University, sits with the historic First Fleet piano, the first piano to arrive on our shores

EXCLUSIVE

VICTORIA LAURIE

From renowned keyboard soloist to piano whisperer, Geoffrey Lancaster says he can't think of any greater privilege than to play and conserve Australia's largest collection of historic pianos, coaxing each one back to playing perfection.

Lancaster has already achieved a remarkable coup in securing this important collection of 18th and 19th-century instruments. Eighteen months ago, Sydney collector Stewart Symonds

donated 140 pianos to the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts at Perth's Edith Cowan University.

The "Founding Pianos" collection includes the historic First Fleet piano, the first instrument to arrive on our shores in 1788; a piano owned by the flute player in composer Joseph Haydn's orchestra; and several of the last surviving pianos made by Europe's greatest master makers.

"I have moved to heaven," says a beaming Lancaster, who took up his academic role at WAAPA three years ago as one of Australia's most respected classical keyboard artists and teachers. "We

are already regarded as one of the world centres for early keyboard art and performance.

"But we want to build a complete collection — our vision is to acquire over time a representative example of every keyboard instrument that has ever existed. It's not a pie in the sky notion."

Word of the piano whisperer's ambition is drawing interest and offers from around the world. "We have already acquired another 50 pianos from the 19th century, and one of the world's most famous collections of instruments in New Zealand, the Mobbs Collection, has been bequeathed to us as well."

But the next goal is to secure the future of these fragile instruments. Lancaster has the university's blessing to establish a centre for keyboard research, where master restorers will come to teach the next generation.

"We're all unbelievably excited by it," says Lancaster, who has won ARIA and Gramophone awards for his recordings and still travels internationally to perform and teach.

"Everywhere I go, the master makers of instruments and museum curators make a consistent lament. They say 'there is no one to take on the knowledge we have about the restoration of

instruments — when we die, that knowledge will die with us'. At WAAPA, we felt we could do something about it. We've already got interest from students in the northern hemisphere, because the only other course in the world, in Nuremberg, is showing signs of closing."

Later this month, British master restorer Lucy Coad will arrive to advise WAAPA on restoring its rare square piano, or small pianoforte, that dates to 1765.

Lancaster says Australia is poised to provide a world-class centre to breathe life into the art of piano restoration. "We want these instruments to be heard."

NAB, ANZ cut rates as mortgage war heats up

RICHARD GLUYAS

National Australia Bank and ANZ Bank have joined a home loan war for owner-occupiers and investors now that the major banks have complied with lending caps imposed by the prudential regulator.

NAB announced yesterday a 50-basis-point cut to 4.09 per cent in its five-year fixed-rate product for owner-occupiers paying principal and interest.

Two and three-year fixed rates for interest-only loans were sliced by 30 basis points to 4.49 per cent.

ANZ followed suit, cutting three and five-year fixed rates by 40 basis points on its interest-only packages for investors.

The rate for the three-year product is now 4.89 per cent, while the five-year loan is pegged at 5.39 per cent.

Commonwealth Bank started the discount war last Friday, slashing its two-year, interest-only fixed-rate loan to investors by 50 basis points to 4.34 per cent.

The remaining big four bank, Westpac, adjusted the same product by 14 basis points.

The Australian Prudential

RATE SHIFTS

Changes to interest-only fixed loans for investors

NAB Two and three-year terms
Down 30 basis points to 4.49%

ANZ Three and five-year terms
Down 40 basis points to 4.89% (three-year) and 5.39% (five-year)

CBA Two-year terms
Down 50 basis points to 4.34%

Regulation Authority launched a crackdown on investor home lending last year to take the heat out of the housing boom.

The regulator told banks to limit the flow of new interest-only lending to 30 per cent of their total new residential mortgage lending. The banks hit the brakes and are now well below APRA's speed bumps.

Sally Tindall, money editor at ratecity.com.au, said the fixed-rate war showed that the major banks were not pricing in an interest-rate increase in the near future.

Video artist Mesiti has last word on Venice

MATTHEW WESTWOOD
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

Video artist Angelica Mesiti has long been interested in unconventional and non-verbal methods of communication — from Morse code to long-distance whistling used in some Mediterranean cultures — but yesterday her message was direct.

"I'm on air, so very excited," she said after being selected to represent Australia at the Venice Biennale contemporary art festival next year.

Mesiti, who grew up in Sydney and is now based in Paris, will make a new installation for the



JOHN FEDER

Angelica Mesiti

Australian Pavilion. She joins a distinguished gallery of Australian artists to show at Venice, including Bill Henson, Arthur

Boyd, Rover Thomas and, last year, Tracey Moffatt.

Her appointment, announced by the Australia Council, is the first since contentious selection rules were introduced last year. The council invited artists to submit proposals to an expert panel chaired by artist and academic Callum Morton, ending what had been a closed process led by an independent commissioner.

The move prompted prominent art patrons Simon Mordant and Neil Balnaves to withdraw funding, saying it would produce a less than optimal exhibition.

Mesiti was selected from more than 70 submissions and a shortlist of five creative teams. She said

she loved the "democratisation" of the selection process.

Exhibition curator Juliana Engberg said Mesiti's Venice project would reflect the complexity of Australian society, its legislation, and "actions that challenge, revise and reinterpret those laws". Mesiti's work is on show at exhibitions in Denmark, the Adelaide Biennial and the National Gallery of Australia.

In previous video installations such as *The Calling*, *The Colour of Saying* and *Nakh Removed*, she has explored humanity's capacity for non-verbal communication, including whistling, "singing" in sign language, and the Berber tradition of *nakh* or "hair dancing".

Loss of second night parrot triggers calls for saviours to be shown the door



Australia's critically endangered night parrot

EXCLUSIVE

GREG ROBERTS

A second critically endangered night parrot disappeared after its mate vanished when it was caught and fitted with a radio transmitter by a team of experts charged with saving the birds from extinction.

The revelation prompted calls for the federal government to sack the night parrot recovery team and appoint a senior public servant to oversee the conservation

program. The night parrot is one of the rarest birds in the world. It had scarcely been reported for more than a century before naturalist John Young photographed one in Queensland in 2013.

A pair of night parrots was discovered in Western Australia last March. *The Weekend Australian* reported last week that recovery team chief Allan Burbidge led an expedition to the site five months later. The team caught one of the parrots and fitted it with a transmitter, but no trace of the bird was found subsequently. Recovery

team sources said for the next three nights, a second parrot called frequently at the site in search of its mate. The second bird then evidently vanished.

Dr Burbidge says the transmitter failed, and there is no evidence the bird fled because it was traumatised, or fell victim to a predator because it was injured or encumbered by the device. But one of his team, Tasmanian zoologist Mark Holdsworth, said it was possible the parrot perished. "That couldn't be ruled out," he said.

Dr Burbidge agreed a second

parrot was calling at the site when the bird was caught. "Steps were taken to specifically avoid flushing or catching this bird," he said. "The signal from the transmitter was lost on the first night but ... one bird was roosting at the capture site for at least two nights after the capture. It later appeared to roost elsewhere."

Zoologists Mark Carter and Chris Watson recorded the calls of what was believed to be a night parrot in the Northern Territory in January 2017. Night parrot recovery team guidelines warn birds

should not be flushed from daytime roosts: "Doing so will expose them to diurnal predators and potential heat stress."

But Mr Carter said the team urged him to flush birds to photograph them. He was told this was standard practice on Pullen Pullen, the Queensland reserve where Mr Young photographed his birds. Referring to the WA capture, Mr Carter said: "Now we learn ... the experts' undertook extremely risky interventions." He said the team should be replaced by a senior statutory officer.

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